

The background of the entire image is a photograph showing several pairs of hands holding a large, shallow wooden box. Inside the box is a lush green lawn with numerous small white daisies and some yellow wildflowers. The hands are positioned around the edges of the box, some holding it from underneath and others from the sides. The lighting is soft and natural, suggesting an outdoor setting. The text is overlaid on this image.

ANTHRO POLOGY THE NEW SCHOOL

SUMMER 2016

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COVER PHOTO CREDIT: MATTHEW MATHEWS

CHAIR'S LETTER

My, well let's call it, tenure as chair will have run its course at the end of June. I'm delighted and just a little stunned to confirm that the department remains largely intact. Of course, I'm disappointed that we haven't yet made the new appointment in anthropology and design (to imprudently name the as yet unnamed position), and I look forward to continuing the search in the fall. To steal an image from a favorite philosopher, finding someone for this particular position is a bit like building a ship at sea: It's possible, but generally not the preferred strategy. My biggest joy is observational—not unreasonable for an anthropology chair, I suppose. The MA cohort that entered when I began as chair has graduated as my chairship ends. What a triumph they've been. And this proud papa isn't the only one to see it this way: Cornell, CUNY Graduate Center, McGill, NYU, Princeton, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, SUNY Binghamton, UC Berkeley, UC Davis, UC Irvine, UC San Francisco, University of Chicago, University of Hawaii, University of Michigan, and University Pennsylvania offered these folk multiyear and tastelessly rich packages. It's taken as self-evident among parents the world over (perhaps as close to a human cultural universal as we'll get) that good parents raise good children; of course, those of us with a more or less dispassionate concern with kids know that good children make good parents. I tip my hat to all our students for making the faculty look so terrific. In the same vein, I tip my hat to the faculty for making this chair look benign. Have a wonderful summer and an exciting reentry in August.

Best,

Larry Hirschfeld



Chimpanzee infant Fanwa is introduced to Bossou chimpanzee culture of nut-cracking. This photo was taken during Nick's winter break fieldwork in Guinea.

Credit: Nick Langlitz

FACULTY NEWS

Our faculty had an exciting semester of research, teaching, and scholarship—here are some of the highlights!

Abou Farman was honored by The Tribeca Film Festival with the invitation to premiere the film he co-wrote and produced, “Icaros: A Vision” (co-directed by Leonor Caraballo and Matteo Norzi). The film received rave reviews from the likes of Richard Brody at *The New Yorker* (<http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2016/04/18/the-best-of-the-tribeca-film-festival>) and Nick Shager at *Variety* (<http://variety.com/2016/film/reviews/icaros-a-vision-film-review-1201759828/>). It was described by the Tribeca Festival as a “uniquely stirring film that touches on the notions of friendship, familial bonds, and the fear of the unknown. Visually inventive and hypnotic in nature, Icaros: A Vision captivates with its meditative look at a little-seen world, punctuated by truly trippy depictions of ceremonial splendor.” Abou is currently shepherding the film around the festival circuit and particularly happy to accompany it back to South America (Bogota, Lima) and its home in the Peruvian amazon. Through the summer, Abou has an installation - the Contemplation Source Room, a reflection on cancer tumors, mortality, hospitalization and care - at the Rubin Foundation’s gallery The 8th Floor, where he will also do a performative lecture in July (photo page 6, courtesy 8th Floor).

This year **Nicolas Langlitz** authored a number of publications, including: “Vatted Dreams: Neurophilosophy and the Politics of Phenomenal Internalism” in the *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*; “Psychedelics can’t be tested using conventional clinical trials” in *Aeon Magazine*, 14 December 2015; along with a co-authored a review of Frans de Waal’s *The Bonobo and the Atheist* with **Cameron Brinitzer**, MA ‘16, who is off to the University of Pennsylvania. The review, “A Catholic Atheist and his Good Monkeys,” can be found in *Anthropology Now* 7(3), 118-124. Additionally, after conducting fieldwork on a chimpanzee laboratory at the Kyoto University Primate Research Institute (KUPRI) in Japan during the summer break, Nicolas Langlitz used the winter break to visit KUPRI’s outdoor laboratory in a remote corner of Guinea to see how Tetsuro Matsuzawa and his team conduct field experiments on the tool use of wild chimpanzees. This is part of a bigger project on chimpanzee ethnography and the controversy over nonhuman cultures in primatology.

Hugh Raffles is writing an ethnography of rocks and stones. His last book, *Insectopedia*, was recently published in France and reviewed in *Le Monde*, *Télérama*, and other outlets. For more information on his work at GIDEST see page 25.

Janet Roitman has three book chapters in press, all stemming from conferences and workshops focused on her recent book, *Anti-Crisis*. These are forthcoming this spring: “Africa, Otherwise” in Brian Goldstone and Juan Obarrio, eds. *African Futures*, University of Chicago Press; “The Stakes of Crisis in Europe” in Poul F. Kjaer and Niklas Olsen, eds. *Critical Theories of Crisis in Europe: From Weimar to the Euro*, London: Rowman and Littlefield; and “Africa without Crisis: the New Global Middle Class” in Johanna Burton, Shannon Jackson, Dominic Willsdon, eds. *Public Servants: Art and the Crisis of the Common Good*, New York: MOMA/The New Museum. She visited Johns Hopkins for the anthropology department seminar and gave a keynote address for a two-day conference, “Possibility Matters,” at the Institute for Critical Inquiry in Berlin this past fall; and will contribute to a workshop at University of Kent Law School entitled “Crisis: Knowledge. History. Law” and will participate in the Remarque Institute’s Kandersteg Seminar in Switzerland, this year entitled “Economies of Crisis.”

Miriam Ticktin was on leave at Princeton’s Institute for Advanced Study this year. She has recently published a number of pieces, including both articles and essays. Her articles include: “Humanitarianism’s History of the Singular” in *Grey Room*; “La souffrance animale à distance. Des vétérinaires dans l’action humanitaire” with Frédéric Keck in *Anthropologie et Sociétés*; “Los problemas de las fronteras humanitarias” (The Problem with Humanitarian Borders) in *Revista de Delalectología y Tradiciones Populares*, which was part of a special issue in Spain on “Migration

and Refuge in the Mediterranean, Beyond Borders.” Her essays were published in *Somatosphere* (<http://somatosphere.net/forumpost/the-temporality-of-disaster>), *Public Seminar* (<http://www.publicseminar.org/2015/09/the-problem-with-humanitarian-borders/#.V3iWFCN962w>), and most recently, she published an essay on the container camp in Calais, in the magazine *The Funambulist* (<http://bit.ly/29D6sHy>). In addition to doing fieldwork at various border walls (US-Mexico; Morocco-Spain), she gave talks at the LSE, in Amsterdam, at University of Kentucky and at U Penn, as well as the keynote at the Swiss Ethnological Society meetings in Bern, Switzerland. Finally, “Futurographies: Cambodia, USA, France,” in which Ticktin was a faculty co-director with Radhika Subramaniam and Jaskiran Dhillon ran at the Sheila C Johnson Design Center from November 20, 2015-January 10, 2016, and then traveled to Phnom Penh, Cambodia and Paris, France this spring (our own former MA student **Elise Gerspach** was one of the curators!).

Additionally, **Neni Panourgia** came back to the department as Visiting faculty and she will be here through the AY 2016-2017. Neni’s term as the Editor for Social Sciences for the Journal of Modern Greek Studies ended in January 2016 but she continues to curate its “Occasional Papers” that she established in 2014 www.press.jhu.edu/journals/journal_of_modern_greek_studies/greek_politics.html. Last July (16-19, 2015) Neni was one of the invited speakers at the international conference “Democracy Rising” organized by the Global Center for Advanced Studies (gcasblog.wordpress.com/2015/05/01/democracy-rising-update-new-partnership-venue-change/) and in late July (24-29, 2015) she participated at the 10th anniversary conference of the Border Crossings Network “International Summer School in Anthropology, Ethnography and Comparative Folklore of the Balkans” (www.border-crossings.eu/konitsa/2015). In October 2015 Neni was invited to the conference “Human Enhancement” organized by the Collège International de Philosophie (Paris) where she presented her new work “Immanent Human(ism)s” (October 1-2-3). In November she was invited to speak at the Historical Trauma Symposium organized by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum at the University of Montana. In the Fall Neni taught an Intro to Anthro class and her seminar “Flesh” Play, Pain, Pleasure”. Since November 2015, Neni is the inaugural faculty in a pilot post-graduate program at Sing Sing, the maximum-security prison in upstate New York, run by three Columbia University centers: Justice in Education, The Justice Initiative, and the Heyman Center, funded by a Mellon Foundation grant. Neni is wrapping up the CHCI/Mellon Foundation Aging Project at Columbia University with a workshop and art exhibit on May 6-7 2016, with the collaboration of **Mercedes Villalba** and **Felipe Meres**. A number of NSSR students are still collaborating with Neni for the completion of the Medicine, Literature, and Humanities project at ICLS (Columbia University) that includes segments on Health and Social Justice (**Veronica Sousa** and **Barkha Kagliwal**), and Bioart (**Felipe Meres** and **Paola Baruffaldi**).





Preparing for a trip to protest in front of the militarized wall dividing Western Sahara, a young boy waves the exiled Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic's flag from the Saharawi refugee camps in Tindouf, Algeria.

Credit: Randi Irwin

BARD PRISON INITIATIVE

Faculty member, **Ann Stoler (AS)** and graduate student, **Emily Sogn (ES), PhD '16**, spent a semester teaching at Eastern Correctional Facility through the Bard Prison Initiative (BPI). Below they discuss the program and their experiences.

To start, can you give a bit of an overview of the Bard Prison Initiative Program?

ES: It's a great program. They're the first privately funded prison education program... it has become a model for a lot of other prison institute learning and it's really because of the founder Max Kenner – who was very smart to figure out as an undergraduate at Bard no less, how to navigate the prison system to organize tutoring and to later use private grants to create a full fledged degree granting program like BPI. A lot of government funding such as Pell Grants had gotten stripped, I believe in the 90s as part of Bill Clinton's crime bill but the private funding has really provided a new model for prison education. There is a robust connections between prison education and reductions in recidivism that make it very obviously effective as a way to reduce rates of people going in and out of prison over and over again. It's one of the reasons why I enjoy teaching there so much – it's because it has such clear benefits – plus many of the students are remarkable. They really realize the value of what they get to do as students, that's one of the incredible things about teaching inside of a prison. It's the perfect antidote to cynicism because you're like, 'Oh, wow, this program is making a huge difference in these people's lives.' Even if it's not about what happens to them afterwards, it's about how they regard themselves and revalue what they do and what they think and what they write and how they express themselves – that's a pretty incredible thing to be a part of.

The (BPI) idea is that they are getting a four-year college education – it's designed around a typical liberal arts education modeled on the liberal arts program that they have at Bard College. So it is a Bard-run program and the idea is that they get the same education as a Bard student would – the program is rigorous so they have to take tests and apply to the program. It's a procedure that ensures that people in the program really want to be there and that they have some of the underlying skills that they need to succeed in the program, but they are taught by professors that teach at Bard and New School and other places around the state. The classes are not watered down – they are very difficult liberal arts classes. Some semesters I actually taught the same courses that I was teaching at Lang and I would use the same readings and same curriculum.

How did you each get involved?

ES: I started working at BPI four years ago. I was hired as an academic advisor [at Bayview Correctional Facility], I had 10-12 advisees a semester and what I was there to do was to talk to them about their experiences in classes; to help troubleshoot any issues they were having, to help them develop a big picture sense of what their goals were in the program and to help them facilitate their plans. It was a medium security prison, so a lot of them were on their way elsewhere or on their way out, so there were some issues of transition coming up. People wanted to figure out how to transfer their credits into a university on the outside or were trying to figure out how close they were to graduating. It really gave me very powerful sense of how effective the program was for the women that were in the program at the time.

They took their position in the program incredibly seriously, sometimes to the point of anxiety so my job was also to assuage some of their anxiety about what was going on inside their classes and to help them find some strategies to really manage their time, to really plan things one step at a time. It really did give me the impression of how seriously they took it and what an important role it was playing in their lives and in the reshaping of their identity as someone who was not just an inmate, but someone who was also a student - it impressed on me how important that was - the BPI program is there to give students an education, but also to give them the chance to see themselves differently, see themselves as someone who is working towards something, someone whose thoughts are valuable, someone whose ideas are valuable, and so I got a very good impression of program just working as an advisor, talking to people one on one.

I started teaching an anthropology course [at Taconic Correctional Facility] and a class called Military Cultures, which is an anthropology of war and conflict class. I taught there for a few semesters and then my last time teaching for BPI was at a men's prison called Eastern Correctional Facility which is also upstate, that's what I did with Ann. That was about a year ago.

AS: I got involved in it because the head of the program contacted me - Megan Callaghan - and said that they had been teaching some of my work in the less advanced part of the prison program and students were asked who they wanted to come for the capstone class and they asked if I could. I was thrilled and honored and immediately said "yes, I'm coming!" I was given license to organize a class on a topic of my choice, and not surprisingly I chose to do it on empire. Uday Mehta at CUNY and Craig Wilder at MIT were doing classes as well so given our mutual interests we organized the classes in a sequence of readings that turned out to be great for the students. I had wanted to teach in prison for a long time and knew about the BPI program. I did not know that it was active in maximum-security prisons. I had the opportunity to teach four seminars over the period of a month and I knew I wanted to make them strong and worthwhile but I really had little idea of what this teaching would entail. Fortunately, Emily was teaching at the same time and we drove up together. It was fantastic to have her experienced, confident self by my side.

Can you say a bit about the course(s) you taught through BPI?

AS: I've taught on colonial formations and imperial histories for a long time, but here I wanted to teach a class on the relationship between empire and global inequalities today. It seemed particularly important that the course be relevant - both historical and contemporary - in a more immediate way. I shared readings that I have used in many graduate seminars - George Orwell, Edward Said, Albert Memmi - readings that were not narrowly academic and invited their reflection and comparisons. I had heard from many people that the BPI students were avid readers but I had not idea that they would read as carefully and astutely as they did - with questions that were challenging and hard to answer. I was literally blown away by the unbelievable care and thoughtfulness that students brought to the class. There were 32 men whose names I knew and who talked about their own backgrounds in the class but I did not know and never asked about why they at this facility, for what kind of crime or for how long. I thank Emily for discussing that with me, how freeing it was for them and for me to engage in a teacher student relationship, with the effort not to bring other baggage to it. Of course it was there but not knowing anymore was important nevertheless. It's arduous to get into the program and it was obvious how hard they had worked to get in and stay in and do the work. This was a treasured moment for intellectual engagement and to think about why these issues matter in the world today.

I didn't know how interested they were going to be in thinking conceptually and practically about what colonialism is and what it does, but they were, and in stunningly sophisticated ways. Someone might easily ask "“Why are you talking about concept work in the BPI program, if you're interested in how things are on the ground?” Those discussions were theirs to pick up on or not but it was their insights that carried the day- people who are in situations of deprivation and distress and subjected to racism and exploitation think a lot about the ways in which they're labeled; the interpellations that classify and corner them. They were fascinated thinking about concepts: What is empire? How does it differ from what it was before? What does the “politics of sympathy” and the “politics of pity” look like today? They related so much of the readings and discussions to their own worlds... and not least to questions of containment and closure.

We talked a lot about what forgetting is and what is not forgotten. One of the students posed to me and the class: ‘Do you think that we could argue that systematic forgetting is a form of structured violence?’ These were not my words. They were wholly his: I just stopped in the middle of the class. He captured a connection that was powerful, and accurate. The questions they asked were just amazing. I was humbled by how much I could not answer and by the experience itself.

ES: You know, from a curricular sense, things aren't really changed to be taught in a prison. On a practical level however, things are very different when you teach inside a prison. Mostly because you don't have any access to students outside of the classroom, students don't have access to email, students have access to very, very limited library services. They do have advisors and tutors who can help on a general level. Sometimes I would trade insights with things that would come up at Bard that maybe my Lang students wouldn't be aware of. Sometimes when I was teaching similar types of curriculum the reactions to the material would be very different. For example, in my Military Cultures class, Lauren Berlant's text on slow death. Both classes found it very interesting, but they each perceived it in a very different way - it was very abstract for my Lang students and it was less so for my Bard students. They [BPI students] brought a lot of their own kinds of experiences, experiences with their families - experiences from their community - to the text in a way that made it much more grounded and created new ways to talk about it and think about it.

Is there anything else you'd like to add?

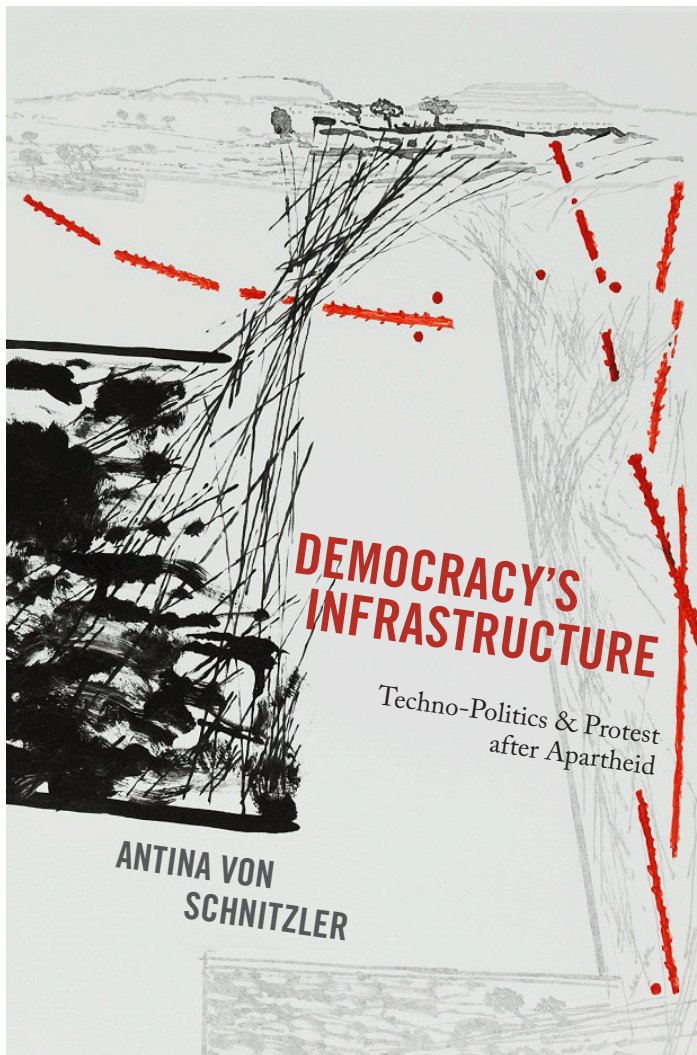
AS: I was just in Lucerne working with artists and photographers thinking about what is a “virtual archive,” something that is and is not there, something that comes out of re-visioning how you see and what you look for... Teaching is something like that- an opening of sorts. It demands a kind of attentiveness to what's going on in the room and how people are or are not working with materials and ideas. The BPI students were wonderful and taught me so much. I look forward to doing it again.

For more information visit bpi.bard.edu.



Image from GIDEST's Ethnography Dialogues Event. For more information on GIDEST visit page 26.

Credit: Matthew Mathews



Cover image: Clive van den Berg, Cartography I, 2009.

www.clivevandenbergh.com.

Antina von Schnitzler is an anthropologist and assistant professor in the Graduate Program in International Affairs. She is also an affiliated faculty member in the NSSR Anthropology Department.

Von Schnitzler is the author of the forthcoming text, *Democracy's Infrastructure: Techno-Politics and Protest after Apartheid* which will be published by Princeton University Press and available for purchase in the Fall.

In the past decade, South Africa's "miracle transition" has been interrupted by waves of protests in relation to basic services such as water and electricity. Less visibly, the post-apartheid period has witnessed widespread illicit acts involving infrastructure, including the nonpayment of service charges, the bypassing of metering devices, and illegal connections to services. *Democracy's Infrastructure* shows how such administrative links to the state became a central political terrain during the anti-apartheid struggle and how this terrain persists in the post-apartheid present. Focusing on conflicts

surrounding prepaid water meters, Antina von Schnitzler examines the techno-political forms through which democracy takes shape.

Von Schnitzler explores a controversial project to install prepaid water meters in Soweto—one of many efforts to curb the nonpayment of service charges that began during the anti-apartheid struggle—and she traces how infrastructure, payment, and technical procedures become sites where citizenship is mediated and contested. She follows engineers, utility officials, and local bureaucrats as they consider ways to prompt Sowetans to pay for water, and she shows how local residents and activists wrestle with the constraints imposed by meters. This investigation of democracy from the perspective of infrastructure reframes the conventional story of South Africa's transition, foregrounding the less visible remainders of apartheid and challenging readers to think in more material terms about citizenship and activism in the postcolonial world.

Democracy's Infrastructure examines how seemingly mundane technological domains become charged territory for struggles over South Africa's political transformation.

sex in the museum

my unlikely career at new york's
most provocative museum

sarah
forbes



Sarah Forbes '06, née Jacobs, has been the curator at the Museum of Sex for the last 10 years. Forbes is the author of *Sex in the Museum: My Unlikely Career at New York's Most Provocative Museum*, a memoir from St. Martin's Press in Spring 2016. Her MA degree serves as the jumping off point of the memoir!

Sarah Forbes was in graduate school when she stumbled upon a museum dedicated to . . . sex. The anthropology student hesitated when her boyfriend suggested she apply for a job, but apply she did, and it wasn't long before a part-time position at New York's MUSEUM OF SEX lead to a gig as the museum's curator. That was over twelve years ago. Now Sarah a married mother of two proudly sports her title as Curator of Sex.

In *SEX IN THE MUSEUM*, Sarah invites readers to travel from suburban garages where men and women build sex machines, to factories that make sex toys, to labyrinthine archives of erotica

collectors. Escorting us in to the hidden world of sex, illuminating the never-talked-about communities and eccentricities of our sexual subcultures, and telling her own personal story of a decade at The Museum of Sex, Sarah asks readers to grapple with the same questions she did: when it comes to sex, what is good, bad, deviant, normal? Do such terms even apply? If everyone has sexual secrets, is it possible to really know another person and be known by them? And importantly, in our hyper-sexualized world, is it still possible to fall in love?

STUDENT AND ALUMNI NEWS

This was a successful year for recent alumni from the doctoral program! **David Bond** has been appointed Associate Director of the Center for the Advancement of Public Action at Bennington College in Vermont. **Kadija Ferryman** has been named a 2016-2017 Postdoctoral Fellow at Data & Society in New York. Additionally, **Emily Sogn** accepted the position of Senior Researcher at Design Science.

Mateusz Halawa has signed a two-year contract to serve as the Head of Social Sciences and Humanities at the School of Form, a design program based in Pozna, Poland. The school was co-founded by Lidewij Edelkoort, who recently joined Parsons as Dean of Hybrid Design Studies. As he wraps up his dissertation, he'll be working with a fantastic team of anthropologists, sociologists, philosophers, and psychologists. **Brie Gettleson** has a fantastic job working as the Social Science Librarian of Magill Library at Haverford College, in Haverford, Pennsylvania. Brie is spending time assisting undergraduates with their research by day while finishing up her dissertation by evening. Congratulations are also in order for **Christina Kim** who turned down both the AKS Postdoctoral Fellowship in Transnational Korean Studies at UCSD and the Korea Foundation Postdoctoral Fellowship at UC, Berkeley in order to take a position as Program Officer with Halifax International Security Forum in DC.

Christina Kim published "Reworking the frame: analysis of current discourses on North Korea and a case study of North Korean labour in Dandong, China," in *Asia Pacific Viewpoint* 56(3) 2015: 392-402. **Cameron Brinitzer** co-published a book review on Frans de Waal's *The Bonobo and the Atheist* with faculty member **Nicolas Langlitz**, which can be found in the December 2015 edition of *Anthropology Now*.

Cam McDonald was named a 2015 Lapidus Summer Fellow at the Center for Jewish History. As a result of this award, he'll conduct original research around the return of Jews and Judaism to modern Spain for a period of six weeks. **Erick Howard** received the 2016 Outstanding Graduate Student Teacher Award at the New School for Social Research.

Additionally, New School students across the MA and PhD programs were highly active at the 2015 American Anthropological Association Conference in Denver. Recently back from the field, **Erick Howard** presented his fieldwork in a paper titled, "Us Veterans": *Indeterminancy and Lakota Refusal* and **Katie Detwiler** presented *Thin Skies, Thick Data: Astronomical Science in the Atacama Desert*. **Julienne Obadia** shared *In Search of Communal Intimacy: Assembly by Aggregation*; **Emily Sogn** presented *Risk Rebranded: War, Trauma, and the Rise of Resilience Theory in the U.S. Military*; **Mateusz Halawa** gave a paper entitled, *Making a Living: How Young Couples in Warsaw Start and Practice a Household*; **Elmer Vergara Malibiran** presented *Rubbles of War: The Afterlife of Refugees and Border Camps in Cambodia*; and **Grzegorz Sokol** presented 'We Don't Know Who's Doing it to Us': *Algorithms & Clinical Agency in Polish Psychiatry*.



Credit: Cam McDonald

FIELD NOTES

FROM THE FIELD

CAM MCDONALD

In the fall of 2015, I was conducting fieldwork in Barcelona, primarily with the descendants of forcibly converted Spanish Jews who are now “returning” to Judaism. Aside from spending a lot of time in conversion classes and chasing people down for interviews, I was a Visiting Researcher in the anthropology department at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. I also began a long-term collaboration with the Portuguese/Catalan performance artist Francesc Ovi, who is in the process of returning to his Jewish roots and developing a cycle of performances dealing with sexuality, embodiment, and objects, which we will jointly write about. In February I moved to Madrid, where my fieldwork and archival research are trained instead on the ways in which anthropological theory, racial thinking, and imperial ambitions have shaped Spanish laws offering citizenship to Sephardic Jews from the early twentieth century to the present. In January, I was interviewed about my research by Radio Sefarad (www.radiosefarad.com/charles-a-mcdonald-return-to-sepharad/). This semester, I am a Visiting Researcher at the department of anthropology at the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid as well as at the Institute for Language, Literature, and Anthropology (ILLA) at the Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (Spanish National Research Council). Between now and when I return to New York in August, I’ll also be making research visits to Portugal to conduct interviews with Jewish returnees as well as with the architects of Portugal’s Sephardic citizenship law, as well as trips to Morocco and Israel to interview citizenship seekers. While the majority of my research has been in resolutely urban settings, I was happy to escape for a conference on Spain’s new Law of Return at the Monastery of San Millán de la Cogolla (in Rioja), which many consider the birthplace of the Spanish language. Participating in the time-honored tradition of skipping the boring panels, a few fellow researchers and I instead wandered the grounds, where we ran into an elderly gentleman who offered us freshly picked walnuts from a wild orchard, which is one of my favorite fieldwork memories thus far!

FROM FIELDWORK TO WRITING

ANA & SCOTT

PhD candidates **Ana Maria Ulloa (AMU)** and **Scott Brown (SB)** reflect on their time in the field and what it's like to transition from field notes to dissertation writing.

Now that you're back from the field, what have you been up to? What are you finding as you sit down to start the writing process? Are there approaches or strategies that have worked well for you?

AMU: After fieldwork instead of going back to New York, I returned to my home city: Bogotá. The first few months were an adjustment and for me it became hard to find again a rhythm propitious for writing. I had to carve a space for myself here and that took some time. So in order to not lose track of my fieldwork while adjusting to a new (yet familiar) place I started working on transcribing interviews and annotating fieldnotes first. This was helpful for organizational purposes, but also as a prompt to remember conversations held and topics discussed and start thinking about connections among my different field sites.

Before starting with the dissertation, I first wrote an article. This was because I had committed myself to do it with one of the places I did fieldwork at. This was a good opportunity for me to write about things from my fieldwork without the need to have in mind a big narrative for the whole dissertation. This was an easier task and it did help bring up a topic that I will cover in my dissertation and had not previously thought of. So for me it worked starting with something in particular that one feels the urge or needs to write and later see how it will fit in the dissertation.

SB: My return from the field has felt rather blurry since most of my field work has been here in NYC and at Parsons. Having grown up in the area and married with a kid, there rarely was much of a distinction between being in the field and being in my normal routine. On the personal side, this has been very helpful and probably allayed a certain level of stress, but it certainly comes with challenges. You are always there and not there and it can be very easy to slip into the everyday.

Now that I'm done with the field (I think this works better for me than 'back') I've spent the last semester teaching at Lang and at GIDEST as a Doctoral Fellow. I think being at GIDEST was very helpful in getting me to start thinking about the writing process. As a Fellow we were required to produce working papers around our research. I used that as an opportunity to make a first pass at putting some of my ethnographic material to work in relation to a larger argument I'd like to explore in one of my chapters. This piece was also written as a potential draft for a talk that I will be giving this summer at Centro University in Mexico City. My strategy these days tends to be to make every endeavor satisfy multiple needs. I think having the constraint of raising a 2 year old has forced me to devise ways to make my approach to work much more efficient. I've found having outside deadlines, rather than simply running on my own schedule, to be really productive.

What do you wish you'd known in the field or what do you think you'd do differently in the field now that you have some hindsight?

SB: If I could do things again I would probably try and be less anxious about capturing everything just right. I think being surrounded by family and everyday life as soon as I returned from a fieldwork session often led me to turn my mind off from what I had experienced during the day.

SB cont'd: As a result, I would try and capture too much in the field. I think this tendency to try and capture things just so actually limits what you can take in. I would try and be more open to letting things unfold and not let the fear of memory distortion have too much hold over me.

Storage, data, tools, instruments. What couldn't you live with in the field? Pre-field everyone seems to ask about the recorder - so what'd you use and do you recommend it? What's your advice for people going to the field in the future?

AMU: Recorder and camera are a must. I always thought of getting the pen that saves your notes digitally but never did. I was afraid of losing my notebooks, but luckily that did not happen. I got to scan one notebook as backup, but it was too much work to do the rest. I have never used my digital copy. If you have different sites keep different notebooks for each site. I didn't use anything else. It is good to keep clips and things one collects in the field in one folder, and I used Evernote for clipping online news. That was helpful.

SB: Well, I must say that I was very anxious approaching the field to try and commit to some kind of digital program that would make compiling and organizing my data more manageable. As I feared, I am hopelessly analog and couldn't make that happen. As a result, I have a folder with a ton of subfolders on my desktop that are mostly organized by site and/or event. That was about as far as I got. Other than that, my tools were pretty standard. Tascam hand recorder and iPhone for audio and a slew of Moleskine notebooks for on the fly jottings. I encourage those who are willing to spare some bandwidth to learn one of the many programs out there that can help with data organization to do so. Going back through the mess can feel daunting at times.

What music are you listening to while you write these days? (Because we can always learn from each other...)

SB: I absolutely cannot write with any music and I've honestly been listening to a lot more podcasts and audio books than music these days anyway. I've actually found thinking about the ways in which people convey information audio inspiring for how I'm thinking about my own writing. I'm currently listening to Kim Gordon's autobiography "Girl in a Band" and am avidly following podcasts like *99% Invisible*, *The Heart*, *Snap Judgement* and *There Goes the Neighborhood*.

AMU: Right now I'm obsessed with Anonhi's new album: *Hopelessness*. But I should stop hearing the words crisis and hopelessness repeatedly if I want to finish this damn thesis. I do try to mix it in. From the most upbeat to the most minimalistic; all depending on how hard it is what I'm writing.

Was fieldwork everything you imagined it to be?

SB: I imagined it to be an overwhelming task and it was. I don't think we spend enough time honing our observational skills in preparation, so in many ways doctoral field work ends up being as much about learning how to do ethnographic research as it is about finding answers to your 'question'. When I feel anxious about not having enough, or having gotten what I needed, I remind myself that this is only part of a much bigger intellectual pursuit.

...

DEPARTMENTAL WORKSHOPS

The Anthropology Student Workshop Series holds biweekly workshops that provide an opportunity for students of all cohorts to meet outside of seminars to discuss with each other, and with local and visiting faculty, issues important to their work and careers. The series is directed by [Ann Stoler](#) and organized by students each year. The Fall 2015—Spring 2016 program was organized by MA student [Cameron Brinitzer](#). Four workshops were held in the fall, beginning with a student-run discussion of departmental life. The second workshop was dedicated to planning the Student Conference and deciding on a planning committee. The last two workshops of the fall semester addressed the MA Exam and writing PhD applications. Seven workshops were held in the spring. [Christina Moon](#) of Parsons, [Eleana Kim](#) of UC Irvine, [Brian McGrath](#) of Parsons, & [Claudio Sopranzetti](#) of Oxford were each featured to discuss their recent scholarship. [Nicolas Langlitz](#) and [Ann Stoler](#) led a workshop attending to the move from writing research papers to writing journal articles. [Abou Farman](#) led a workshop entitled Ethnography & Media. In the final workshop, visiting scholar [Tehseen Noorani](#) presented his participation in developing and sustaining an international research network as a PhD student that remains active nearly a decade after its inception.



Talal Asad leads a seminar during the 2015 Institute for Critical Social Inquiry, directed by **Ann Stoler.**

**For more information about the Institute:
www.criticalsocialinquiry.org**

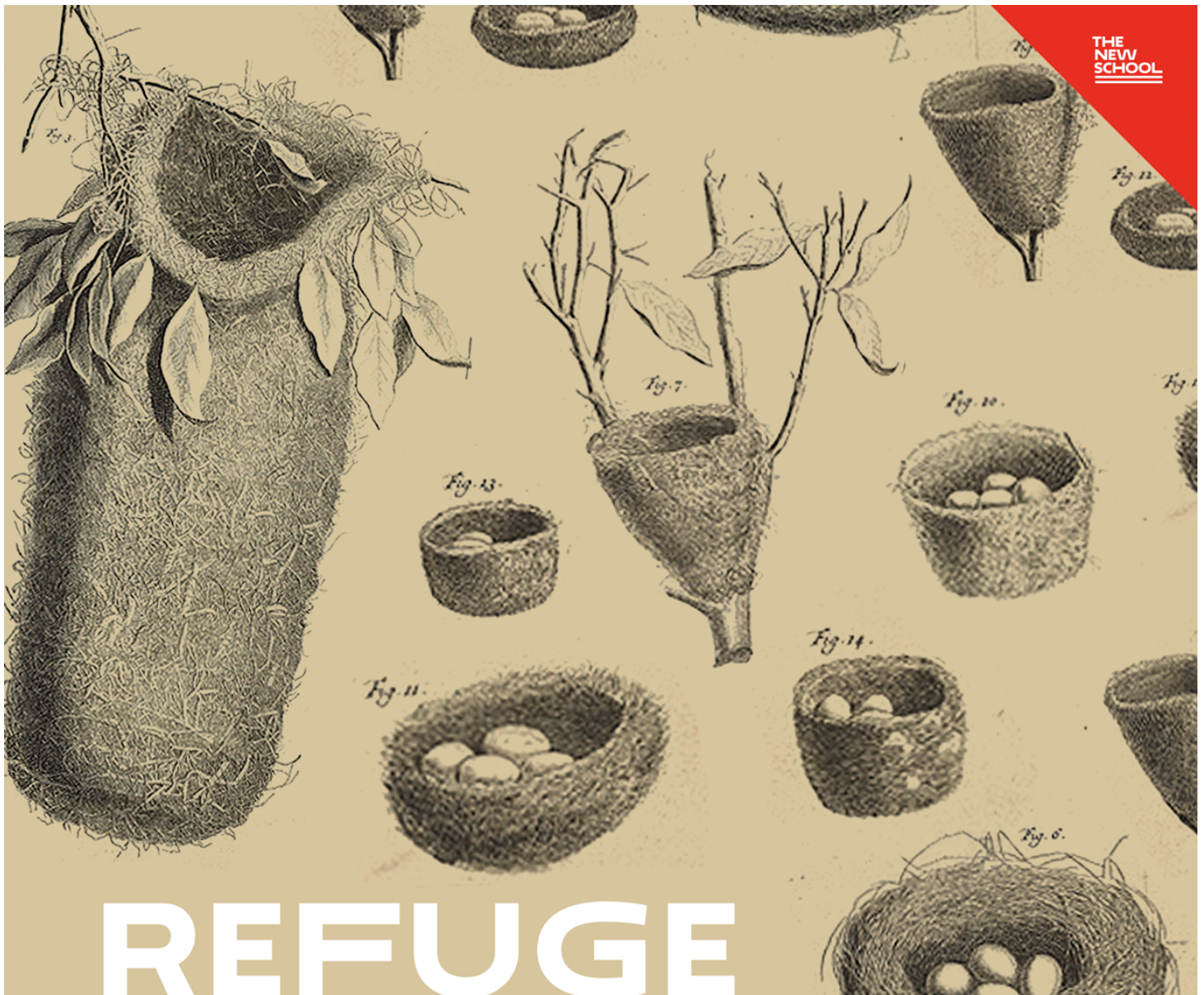
SPRING LECTURE SERIES

This spring, the department welcomed three guest lecturers: Derek Gregory (University of British Columbia), James Faubion (Rice University), and Naisargi Dave (University of Toronto).

Derek Gregory delivered a lecture titled, “Angry Eyes: The God Trick and Geographies of Militarized Vision.” Dr. Gregory trained as an historical geographer at the University of Cambridge. One year after his BA, he was appointed University Assistant Lecturer in Geography and elected a Fellow of Sidney Sussex College. Over the next sixteen years, his research focused on the historical geography of industrialization and on the relations between social theory and human geography, using each program of research to inform and advance the other. He focused on processes of his- torical and geographical change – on periods of crisis and transformation – and explored a range of critical theories that showed how place, space, and landscape have been involved in the operation and outcome of social processes.

James Faubion, Professor and Chair of the Anthropology Department at Rice University, presented his latest work in a paper entitled, “Parabiopolitics: It Isn’t in the Numbers.” Professor Faubion is currently beginning work on a project that will focus on scenario construction. The themes central to the project include the problematization of the statistical representation of the future, the logical and rhetorical dimensions of the narrative imagination of the future, and the contemporary modalities of the engagement with risk and uncertainty. As an extension of the Public Lecture Series, graduate student **Cameron Brinitzer** published an interview with Professor **James Faubion**. The interview, which delves into questions of interdisciplinarity, has been published on Full Stop’s website and can be found at: <http://www.full-stop.net/2016/04/26/interviews/cameron-brinitzer/james-faubion/>

Naisargi Dave delivered a lecture entitled, “On Contradiction: Humans, Animals, and ‘the Way Things Are’.” Professor Dave’s research concerns emergent forms of politics and relationality in contemporary urban India. Her book, *Queer Activism in India: A Story in the Anthropology of Ethics* (Duke 2012) explores the relationship among queer politics, activism, and affect. Her second book project, *The Social Skin: Humans and Animals in India* engages critically with humanism and the privileging of reason to consider myriad facets of working with and for urban and working animals in India. This project has been funded by a SSRHC Standard Research Grant and a fellowship from the Jackman Humanities Institute. Professor Dave teaches courses on animality and posthumanism, affect, ethics, anthropological theory, activism, gender and sexuality, and the anthropology of South Asia.



THE NEW SCHOOL FOR SOCIAL RESEARCH
ANTHROPOLOGY GRADUATE STUDENT CONFERENCE

image courtesy of

MAKE (REFUGE)

Learning to live & feel in times of duress, we have taken to conceptualizing what Refuge is, but what it most certainly is not, yet what it can also be. From colonial refuge to the refuge of imagination, from the foreclosures it avails the refugee of, to seeking refuge in exile to home and beyond, there was much to talk about in this year's Graduate Student-led Conference.

Graduate Students from NSSR, Parsons, Columbia University, and the University of Pennsylvania all contributed to making this year's conference a true success. Many congratulations to the organizers and presenters!

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE:

Opening Provocation by **Ann Stoler**

1st Panel: Cell

- Aya Jaffar**, Transdisciplinary Design (MFA), Parsons – Narratives of (Post) displacement: Designing spaces for integration
- Valerie Giesen**, Anthropology (MA), Columbia University – We have never been colonial – Germany and the refugee crisis
- Ramon de Haan**, Anthropology (MA), NCSR – Dutch Anxiety: Fear for the Syrian Refugee in the Netherlands
- Anke Gruendel**, Design Studies (MA), Parsons – Governing Contingency: The Technopolitics of Design Led Public Innovation

Making Refuge with **Catherine Bestemann & Bernadette Ludwig**

2nd Panel: Haven

- FaDi Shayya**, Theories of Urban Practice (MA) & **Nadine Rachid**, Design and Urban Ecologies (MS), and **Kartik Amarnath**, Design and Urban Ecologies (MS), Parsons – Refuge and the Territoriality of Habitation: A Critical Inquiry
- Yemima Cohen** – A House of prayer for all nations, (terms & conditions may apply): how heritage sites around the Temple Mount create group boundaries

3rd Panel: Asylum – 3:10-4:30

- Valentina Ramia**, Anthropology (MA), NCSR – Foreclosure: A Concept at its Site
- Ye Liu**, Sociology (MA), NCSR – Re-imagining refuge: An approach of spatial realpolitik
- Michelle Munyikwa**, Anthropology (MD/PhD), University of Pennsylvania – Seeking Refuge: Black Americans Seeking the Otherwise

4th Panel: Shelter – 5:15-6:30

- Erick Howard**, Anthropology (PhD), NCSR – No Refuge in Return: intimacies of home and exile on a Lakota reservation
- Tamara Álvarez Fernández**, Anthropology (PhD), NCSR – Searching for Refuge in the Cosmos: Humans as Interplanetary Species
- Elisa Taber**, Anthropology (MA), NCSR – “(Know you Know) What You Don’t Know”

// Multisensory offerings:

Aya Jaffar, Transdisciplinary Design (MFA), Finishing Thesis
 Narratives of (Post)Displacement [Refuge] mini-Exhibit: Designed objects, spaces & interactions for an imaginary infrastructure

Brendan & Jeremy Smyth (Documentary Filmmakers)

“Seeking refuge in money”: The story of Israel Garcia Lopez from Oaxaca, Mexico, living like a ghost in the US

“Rice for Sale”: Vignettes of Balinese migrants working alongside Israel



Image: Marina Rosenfeld

GRADUATE INSTITUTE FOR DESIGN, ETHNOGRAPHY & SOCIAL THOUGHT

GIDEST — the NSSR-based Graduate Institute for Design, Ethnography & Social Thought — is coming to the end of its second year. Funded by the Mellon Foundation and the New School Provost's Office, we support cross-disciplinary ethnographically grounded research located somewhere in the intersection of social/cultural theory, design, and the arts, and we encourage dialogue and creativity on related themes across the university. Our main activities are a bi-weekly public seminar held on Fridays at noon in our lab in the University Center and an annual fellowship program that gives residencies to eight faculty and five doctoral students from all parts of the university. Fellows have come from anthropology, sociology, design, history, data visualization, fashion, philosophy, film, literature, urban studies, food studies, politics, and more. So far, we have appointed three anthropology GIDEST doctoral fellows: **Scott Brown**, **Mateusz Halawa**, and **Alexios Tsigkas**. This year, anthropologist **Antina von Schnitzler** is a GIDEST faculty fellow; next year, **Miriam Ticktin** will join us. GIDEST is led by **Hugh Raffles**. Our Program Assistant is **Liliana Gil**.

Our bi-weekly seminar is a unique opportunity for faculty and students to engage scholars and practitioners in in-depth discussion of their work-in-progress. Papers or other materials (film, video, etc.) for the seminars are posted on our website one week before the event and everyone attending is encouraged to read closely. This year's presenters included our seven faculty fellows plus experimental filmmaker **Kevin Jerome Everson**, sound artist **Marina Rosenfeld**, architect-activist **Eyal Weizman**, lighting designer **Linnaea Tillett**, and artist-designer **Ernesto Oroza**.

This year, we've also run additional events: a series of "Ethnography Dialogues" organized by fellows **Barbara Adams**, **Scott Brown**, and **John Bruce** that brought practitioners and researchers from the world of art and design into conversation with researchers from the social sciences to discuss ethnographic practice. Barbara, Scott, and John also organized "Ethnography in the Expanded Field," an open call for submissions in any media that was exhibited in our lab in May and archived on a public platform. That week, **Abou Farman's** "Utopias" class also took over the lab for a public exhibit of their work.

Please visit our web site at <http://gidest.org> for information on our events and on the program in general. Next year promises to be exciting with a new cohort of fellows that includes an artist-in-residence who'll be staging public events in and around the lab and an exciting list of presenters that we will announce soon. Everyone is welcome to join our seminars and other activities. We'll be very happy to see you there!

GIDEST www.gidest.org
Room 411, 63 Fifth Avenue



Above: Still from Kevin Jerome Everson's *The Equestrians* (2011)

Below: Tony Dunne & Fiona Raby, "Digiland" from *United Micro Kingdoms* (2012/13)